

There is a lot to be said for small town charm. Sure, big cities have their appeal, but the South has a surprising number of outstanding gems that are relatively undiscovered great locations for business, as well as raising families. They won't stay undiscovered for long.

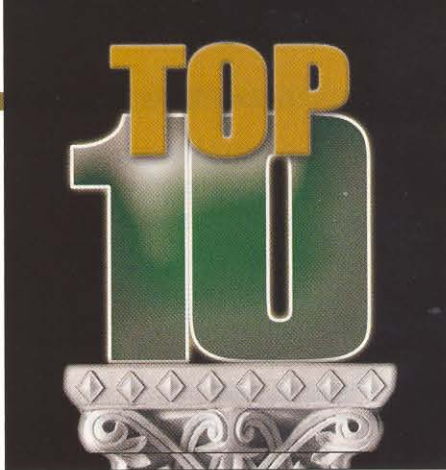
1. They say location is everything. As the midpoint between the upstate business center of Greenville and the state capital Columbia, **Laurens, S.C.**, is perfectly positioned to provide access to everything the state has to offer. Laurens is located at the intersection of Interstates 26 and 385, and Charlotte and Atlanta are both within a couple hours' drive – making the entire eastern U.S. easily accessible.

Laurens offers more than just an outstanding locale for distribution and access. Four industrial parks are located here, with significant available land for development, as well as access to Clemson University's new International Center for Automotive Research (CU-ICAR) – which has set its sights on becoming the premier automotive and motorsports research and educational facility in the world. The area is growing rapidly, with a number of international companies locating here recently, including Avery Dennison, Wal-Mart, Michelin and Dupont.

2. It's extremely rare that you find a community of 25,000 people that is also home to 10 Fortune 500 companies, but that's exactly the case with **Russellville, Ark.** The town's 8,000 manufacturing employees work for divisions of Cargil, ConAgra Foods, Dow Chemical, Firestone, International Paper, Trinity and Tyson Foods. Why have so many great companies chosen to locate in Russellville? Accessibility and a pro-business climate.

The town is located right along Interstate 40, the Arkansas River and the Union Pacific Railroad – 65 miles west of Little Rock and 75 miles east of Ft. Smith. It is a location that provides great infrastructure as well as the aesthetic advantages of being located between the Ozark National Forest and the Ouachita National Forest.

The people of Russellville recognize



SMALL TOWNS IN THE SOUTH THAT DESERVE A SECOND LOOK

the advantage of supporting business in their community. In June 2007, they voted to extend a one-cent sales tax to fund a number of projects, which has served to



Business, industry, and government leaders came together in support of Senior Life's grand opening in Albany, Ga. Senior Life chose Albany for its new call center and corporate training center, which will host more than 300 agents when at capacity.



Sterilite Corporation chose Laurens County, S.C., one of the communities on our Top 10 list, as its new home in 2004. The company currently employs 730 in the community of Clinton.

'MINING' THE WEB FOR YOUR NEW SITE IN ALBANY AND DOUGHERTY COUNTY

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encourage business to locate here. The tax increase will go to fund, among other projects, the purchase of property for an upscale hotel and 60,000-square-foot convention center, which should only encourage more companies to consider moving here.

3. Plant City, Fla., is proud of its reputation as "The Winter Strawberry Capital of the World." The town has an annual Strawberry Festival that draws thousands of people every winter to Plant City's lovely downtown. This city wants to become more than just an annual festival draw.

Plant City is a historic town with a diverse culture and a rich local economy. Manufacturing, mining, agriculture and aquaculture provide the basis for the area's revenue. The community's recently approved midtown redevelopment plan will only serve to make it more appealing to business.

Plant City is also a major distribution center for food products and paper, which is not surprising given the community's outstanding location. It is a short distance from Tampa's deep-water port, two major interstates (I-4 and I-75) and the CSX railroad. More than 60 trucking firms serve the local industries.

4. Dyersburg, Tenn., is literally at the heart of the country. This small, but rapidly growing community is within 100 miles of the geographic population center of the United States. And that locale comes with some pretty hefty advantages.

Dyersburg is accessible by interstate highways, a major rail line, air facilities and the Mississippi River. Plus, the area boasts a low cost of living, and a \$2.6 million conference facility that also houses the Dyer County/Dyersburg Chamber of Commerce. All of this is why Dyersburg has become home to some pretty major corporate facilities in recent years, including Quebecor, Bekaert, Jimmy Dean Foods, Caterpillar and Dr. Pepper/Pepsi Bottling.

Being named one of the best places in the U.S. to retire by Fox News doesn't hurt either.

5. In October, Southland Renewable Fuel announced construction of a state-of-the-art 60 million gallon per year biodiesel manufacturing facility in the new Riverport West Industrial Park in **Paducah, Ky.** The facil-

Raise the bar.



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Making plans to do business in any new location is a huge step. For over a century, Bradley Arant lawyers have helped national and international companies make that step into Alabama. We've successfully negotiated complex incentive packages with the State of Alabama and local governments to locate billion dollar projects employing thousands, and we've drafted legislation and agreements that have paved the way for the automotive industry in the New South. It's our role to help you know the local issues, know the local players, and know what it takes to get where you want to go. *We call that raising the bar.*



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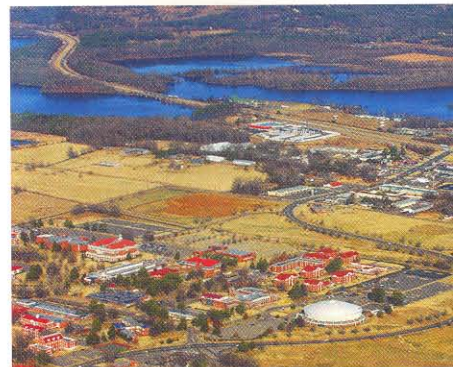
ity is expected to "utilize cutting edge technology that will help reduce America's dependence on foreign oil." The impact on this community is immense.

The Southland announcement is just another in a series of corporate locations to Paducah, a community that is strategically located at the convergence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers. And location is one of the biggest draws of this community. It is accessible to major markets like Chicago, St. Louis, Memphis and Atlanta via inter-

state, as well as river barge access along the Tennessee and rail service.

Paducah's cost of living is extremely low, in addition to offering companies excellent benefits like very low electric rates and a wealth of cultural and educational opportunities.

6. One of the most attractive features of **Kingsland, Ga.**, is the friendly people. Kingsland is a small community that hosts an annual Labor Day Catfish Festival, the



Runabout Car Show, Armed Forces Day and many other local events. It is a great community for retirees, with a relaxed pace, beautiful scenery and lots of great outdoor recreational activities.

Kingsland is also an outstanding location for business. Aside from the fact that the local school system is excellent, this community offers tremendous accessibility and workforce development. Kingsland is right along I-95, with easy access to Jacksonville (Fla.) International Airport and the Ports of Jacksonville and Brunswick.

Most of all, it's the draw of the local culture that most people find so appealing and it shows.

7. Ten years ago, **Huntington, W.Va.** faced a crisis – the community's largest employer closed shop and 600 local jobs were lost. The result, however, was the creation of the Huntington Area Development Council (HADC), an organization that has helped to attract more than 9,000 new jobs and \$260 million in new capital investment.

One of the major reasons they've been so successful is that they are recruiting for an area that has a ton of natural advantages for business. Huntington boasts one of the nation's most advanced telecommunications infrastructures, as well as extremely low costs for utilities, health care and transportation.


Huntington is also within one day's drive of 44 percent of the industrial market and 37 percent of the consumer market in the United States, making it a great choice for distribution operations. It's not surprising, then, that the HADC has been able to bring so much business into this growing community.

8. "We've been made to feel very much at home in **Waycross** and are anxious to ge


★ Vivian, LA

Vivian, LA
TOP 10 Small Town
 In the South that deserves
 a second look
2008


TAKE A




CLOSER




LOOK



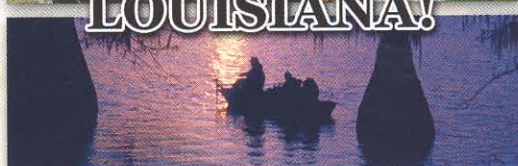
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For more information on Vivian and all of Northwest Louisiana contact:
 Kurt Foreman * 318-677-2512 * kurt@nledf.org
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(Left) Russellville, Ark. is the home of Arkansas Tech University (foreground) and beautiful Lake Dardanelle and is easily accessible via Interstate 40, U.S. Highway 64, Scenic State Highway 7, the Arkansas River and the Union Pacific Railroad. Arkansas Tech University is a four-year institution that is home to more than 7,500 full-time students. It offers several training curriculums for business and industry and degree programs through the master's level.

started" said Mark Thompson, CEO of Enhanced Recovery Corp. (ERC). Company leaders announced, in July 2007, that they were investing \$5.5 million in a call center facility in Waycross, Ga., that will employ 300 people.

What attracts companies like ERC to Waycross is the city's low cost of living and high quality of life, as well as the city's accessibility to the entire eastern U.S. Waycross is less than 100 miles from Jacksonville, Fla., and situated close to both the Jacksonville and Brunswick Ports.

It is also a great place to raise family, with substantial outdoor recreation activities and very good local schools.

9. Albany, Ga., is home to more than 118 manufacturing plants, including Procter & Gamble, SAB-Miller Brewing and Masterfoods USA. Albany is also one of the most economically active areas in Georgia.

One of the outstanding benefits of Albany is its location – close to the borders of Georgia, Florida and Alabama. Albany draws workers and visitors from all three states. In addition, the community's location gives companies the competitive advantage of being able to reach 82 percent of the U.S. industrial market and 79 percent of the largest consumer markets within two truckload days or less.

On top of all this, Albany is a very attractive place to live. There are museums, shops, theatres and the Flint Riverquarium, which features one of the few open air aquariums in the world.

10. Vivian, La., is not like most towns its size. It's a place where people in the community contribute to the welfare of the whole area – whether it is leaders providing incentives programs to attract teachers to the schools, developing local events like

Redbud and Country Christmas or a local entrepreneur providing wireless Internet access. Vivian is a quiet community with the infrastructure, workforce and location to attract business.

Construction on Interstate 49 soon will connect Vivian with Shreveport and Texarkana, opening up this whole region on a transportation level. With this increased accessibility, companies will find Vivian a very attractive (and low-cost)

option for facilities – especially the area's two major industrial districts.

What was once a boomtown continues to be developed into an attractive option for business in the Information Age.

As companies continue to seek low-cost, high-value location options, these small Southern cities offer all you could ask for and more, but the secret is already getting out. You better take a second look while you can. ■

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VARIETY
THE SPICE OF SUCCESS.

Since youth, everyone's been advised against 'putting all your eggs in one basket.' And never has that sage advice been more important than when planning an area's economic growth.

The Alliance has followed that advice as it strives to attract new business to the River Valley, in an effort to avoid the "Boom or Bust" tendency when an area's economy relies on only one facet of the business world. And, variety works in favor of the labor pool by giving workers diverse choices when it comes to jobs.

Indeed, variety is the spice of a community's success.

ARKANSAS Valley Alliance
FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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